the mining lessees are offered field guidance for conservation of minerals, scientific mining and protection of environment so that the mining operations are carried out in accordance with provisions of MCDR, 1988. Ordinarily, in cases of violations of less serious category, mining lessees are persuaded to comply the same. In case of more serious category of violations, prosecution cases are launched in deserving cases. There are provisions for stringent penalty for continuing contravention of the rules.

Value addition to minerals

2109. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the provisions in the MMRD Act are encouraging unscientific mining practices and export of minerals, instead of value addition with in the country;

(b) whether Government are considering to give priority to the industries adding value substantially to the minerals by suitable amendment in the law; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) No, Sir. Section 18 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) enjoins upon the Central Government to take all necessary steps for conservation and systematic development of minerals in India. In pursuance of the above Section 18, the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 1988 have been framed to ensure systematic and scientific mining. The value addition to the mineral is a commercial decision of the investors depending on the viability of the project as mining is a separate industry in its own right. Section 11(3)(d) of the MMDR Act provides for considering the investment which the applicant proposes to make in the mines and in the industry based on the minerals while deciding merits of various applicants.

(b) and (c) In view of the above, question does not arise.

Minerals exploration and production

2110. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the guidelines issued by the

Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2003 which would practically stop any new mineral exploration and production in the scheduled areas;

(b) whether Government are aware that substantial portion of the country's minerals reserves are in the Scheduled Areas; and

(c) if so, the measures taken or contemplated to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has informed that guidelines dated 20.10.2003 issued by them do not prohibit any project including mineral exploration and production in the Scheduled Areas.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In view of (a) above, does not arise.

Illegal mining

†2111. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that illegal mining at hills and rivers has been going on in the various States despite a ban imposed thereon; and

(b) if so, the details of the steps Government have taken to check such illegal mining in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Instances of illegal mining in different States have come to the notice of the Government from time to time and have been forwarded to the concerned States for suitable action.

(b) To effectively curb illegal mining, State Governments have been empowered to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals under the provisions of Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

Minerals in continental shelf/territorial waters

2112. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.